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## Images of the Pagan Gods

*Papers of a Conference in Memory of Jean Seznec*

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## Seznec, Saxl and *La Survivance des dieux antiques*

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Jean Seznec (1905–1983), French scholar and man of letters, is best known today for his synthetic study of the transmission of ancient myth, *La Survivance des dieux antiques: Essai sur le rôle de la tradition mythologique dans l'humanisme et dans l'art de la Renaissance*. The book was published in 1940 as the eleventh volume in the series 'Studies of the Warburg Institute'.<sup>1</sup> Archival documents bearing on Seznec's contacts with the Warburg Institute and its director Fritz Saxl in the years preceding the publication of *La Survivance des dieux antiques* tell a story of no small cultural-historical interest, and one that contributes to an understanding of the book's particular character and the scholarly function it came to play. The moment of its appearance, in the early days of the second world war, could hardly have been less propitious: indeed all but a few copies sat in a warehouse in France until 1945. After the war, however, the book enjoyed conspicuous and enduring success. It was awarded the Prix Fould by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1948, soon translated into English (1953), with paperback editions following in 1961 and 1972, and subsequently translated into Japanese (1977), Italian (1981), Spanish (1983), and German (1990). In 1980 Flammarion published a second edition of the French original.

The book's demonstrated wide appeal may be located in part in its very resistance to categorization, a resistance that caused Seznec some problems in the period of its genesis. In a letter of 28 November 1937 to Jérôme Carcopino, then director of the Ecole française de Rome, Seznec noted his own 'position indécise entre plusieurs disciplines'.<sup>2</sup> His work, he acknowledged, had a 'caractère hybride':

1. The principal source of biographical information on Seznec is the memorial by A. H. T. Levi and F. Haskell: 'Jean Joseph Seznec, 1905–1983', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 73, 1987, pp. 643–55. There are appreciations in two Festschriften: *The Artist and the Writer in France*, ed. F. Haskell, A. Levi and R. Shackleton, Oxford, 1974, with 'A Personal Postscript' by Jean Adhémar; and *Patterns of Inquiry*, special issue of *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, IV, Fall–Winter 1975–76, with introduction by B. F. Bart. In 1989 Alain Seznec deposited his father's *Nachlass* in the Taylor Institution in Oxford (MS Fol. E. 21–28). The papers include a full curriculum vitae, unpublished texts of lectures, and miscellaneous notes on French authors and painters from Balzac through Voltaire, including Diderot. Extensive correspondence is preserved in the Warburg Institute Archive (WIA, GC – Seznec). For permission to publish archival materials I am grateful to the director of the Warburg Institute, Professor Charles Hope.

2. Seznec (Florence) to Carcopino (Rome), 28 November 1937. The letter is preserved at the Ecole française de Rome [Box 31/5], the sole document in the archive relevant to Seznec. On Carcopino (1881–1970), archaeologist, historian, and a minister of education in the Vichy government, see most recently S. Corcy-Debray, *Jérôme Carcopino, un historien à Vichy*, Paris, 2001. On his directorship of the EFR (1937–39), G. Vallet, 'Jérôme Carcopino, Directeur de l'Ecole française de Rome', in *Hommage à la mémoire de Jérôme Carcopino*, Paris, 1977, pp. 331–40.

I undertook in Rome in 1929 a thesis now approaching completion; it will be ready for printing this spring: the Warburg Institute in London has asked me to publish it in its «*Studien zum Nachleben der Antike*». The topic is the survival of the antique gods in the Middle Ages, in culture and in art; the role of this medieval tradition in the Italian Renaissance, and its fortunes in European humanism. This enormous subject necessarily embraces several domains: philology, archaeology, history of art, and comparative literature. My work, as a consequence, displays a hybrid character, which prevents it from being placed in a fixed category. From this, certain vexations that I had not foreseen.<sup>3</sup>

The vexations were brief but are revealing. When in the previous June Seznec had sought his 'inscription sur la liste d'aptitude' from the professors of literature at the Sorbonne, his work had been seen as falling outside the category of French literature. He attributed this check in part to his 'patrons', who included two art historians, Emile Mâle and René Schneider, and only one literary historian, Gustave Cohen. He asked Carcopino to argue on his behalf, should the occasion arise, that 'archaeology and history offer a very decent preparation for understanding the literary history of the Renaissance, and for teaching it.'<sup>4</sup>

Seznec received the *docteur ès lettres* from the Sorbonne in 1940, Henri Focillon and others offering support.<sup>5</sup> After a brief stint in the French military,<sup>6</sup> he launched a distinguished international career in literary studies. From 1941 to 1949, he was a professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University and from 1950 to 1972, holder of the Marshal Foch Chair in French

3. Seznec (Florence) to Carcopino (Rome), 28 November 1937: 'J'ai commencé à Rome en 1929 une thèse qui touche à sa fin; elle sera prête au printemps pour l'impression: l'Institut Warburg, de Londres, me l'a demandée pour la publier dans ses «*Studien zum Nachleben der Antike*». Il s'agit de la survivance des dieux antiques au Moyen Age, dans la culture et dans l'art; du rôle de cette tradition médiévale dans la Renaissance italienne, et de sa fortune dans l'humanisme européen. Cet énorme sujet embrasse nécessairement plusieurs domaines : philologie, archéologie, histoire de l'art, et littérature comparée. Mon travail présente par suite un caractère hybride, qui ne permet pas de le ranger dans une catégorie déterminée. De là, des déboires que je n'avais pas prévus.'

4. Ibid. 'Puis-je vous demander, monsieur le Directeur, de témoigner à l'occasion qu'un ancien romain n'est pas nécessairement fourvoyé dans la littérature, et que l'archéologie et l'histoire préparent assez bien à comprendre l'histoire littéraire de la Renaissance, et à l'enseigner?'

5. Ibid.: '... j'ai lieu de penser que ma position indécise entre plusieurs disciplines a été pour quelque chose dans cet échec. J'avais pour patrons, à ce moment-là, deux historiens de l'art, MM. Mâle et Schneider, et un seul « littéraire », M. Cohen. Depuis lors, M. Focillon est devenu rapporteur de ma thèse principale, à laquelle s'intéresse également M. Renaudet. Eclairé sur les difficultés de la situation, il m'a cependant encouragé à persister dans la même voie.' The link with Focillon was fostered by the Warburg Institute. Cf. Seznec (Paris) to Saxl (London), 10 June 1937: 'j'ai vu hier Focillon, qui (*grâce à vous*) m'a reçu à bras ouverts'; Saxl (London) to Seznec (Paris), 15 June 1937: 'I am very, very glad that Focillon encouraged you to go on the lines of art history, and I feel sure that he will do whatever he can to help you. Mâle and Focillon should really be sufficient to bring your professorship about.' Focillon was in fact in the United States in 1940 so could not be on the jury (Seznec to Bing, 13 March 1940).

6. After war broke out, Seznec was made a lieutenant in the Chasseurs Alpins (100<sup>e</sup> Bataillon, 1<sup>ère</sup> Compagnie, Secteur postal 390) – a chilly and depressing business. With the French–German armistice, he was demobilized.

Literature at the University of Oxford.<sup>7</sup> He would always retain his early predilection for cross-disciplinary work and often studied writers who drew inspiration from art and artists who drew inspiration from literature.

It was in the decade of the 1930s, before the submission and publication of *La Survivance des dieux antiques*, that Seznec developed his scholarly persona, and he did so when in close contact with members of the Warburg circle. For there is another way in which the book has a 'caractère hybride'. Published simultaneously as a thesis (in official Sorbonne format) and as a volume in the 'Studies of the Warburg Institute', it is itself a product of disparate academic cultures. Seznec was trained in the French tradition: he attended the Lycée at Rennes and the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris and took the *agrégation* at the Ecole normale supérieure in Paris in 1928. Yet, unusually for a Frenchman in this era, he chose to align himself with a current in contemporary German scholarship, the cultural historical study of the *Nachleben der Antike* as practiced in Hamburg by the followers of Aby Warburg (1866–1929). In 1930 Seznec established contact with the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg (KBW) and, after the library's move from Nazi Germany to London in 1933, maintained close ties with the Warburg Institute. His 'position indécise entre plusieurs disciplines' ensured his welcome in this emphatically interdisciplinary environment, as did his interest in the journeys of the pagan gods from antiquity to the Renaissance – a core Warburgian topic, especially for Warburg's successor, Fritz Saxl. The book Seznec wrote bears the marks of a training in French literature in its meticulous analyses of the interrelations among texts and between texts and images, in its essayistic clarity and synthetic thrust,<sup>8</sup> and in certain of its contents.<sup>9</sup> Yet it functions as well as a creative re-presentation of a quantity of material, textual and pictorial, that had been gathered up and analyzed by scholars standing in the Warburgian tradition. Over the years Seznec's synthesis would provide a gateway for many to key Warburgian themes. Letters preserved in the Warburg Institute Archive

7. Seznec's inaugural lecture at Oxford (27 May 1952) might have interested the professors at the Sorbonne. Entitled 'On Two Definitions of Literature', it offered a comparative analysis of two works published under the title *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* – one by Charles Du Bos (1939), the other by Jean-Paul Sartre (1945). After the war, Seznec was offered a position at the University of Bordeaux (Seznec to Saxl, 16 February 1945), and there was talk of one at the Sorbonne: 'on m'offre une place là-bas (je veux dire: à la Sorbonne) dans trois ou quatre ans. Qu'en pensez-vous?' (Seznec to Saxl, 31 August 1945). In the first of these letters Seznec indicated that, unsure of conditions in France, though eager to return, he might decide, 'at least for the immediate future', to keep his position at Harvard University, where 'there seem to be some interesting prospects'.

8. Among Seznec's 'patrons' (n. 5), not only Emile Mâle wrote synthetic works of broad scope; Schneider and Cohen collaborated in those years on their *La formation du génie moderne dans l'art de l'Occident, arts plastiques, art littéraire*, Paris, 1936; this was vol. XLVIII in the series: *Evolution de l'humanité, synthèse collective*, inaugurated in 1920.

9. Defending the relevance of his research to literary study, Seznec wrote to Carcopino (as n. 3): '... ma thèse secondaire a pour sujet : L' « Episode des Dieux dans la Tentation de Saint-Antoine » (Flaubert et l'histoire des religions) ; ma thèse principale elle-même touche à Jean Lemaire de Belges, à Rabelais, à Ronsard et à Montaigne.'

– including three published in an appendix to this essay – shed light on the genesis of *La Survivance des dieux antiques* even as they illuminate the conditions of academic exchange in the interwar years.

The connection with the KBW was forged in the spring of 1930, a half-year after the death of Aby Warburg, at the beginning of a new phase in the Library's history. Seznec, then twenty-five years old, wrote as a 'membre de l'Ecole française de Rome' to the Austrian-born art historian Fritz Saxl, then forty years old, director of the KBW, asking for scholarly advice. Saxl responded with abundant thoughts, Seznec replied gratefully, and an academic friendship was born. In the following September the two scholars met in Brussels at the 12th International Congress of the History of Art.<sup>10</sup> By 1931 the Warburgians in Hamburg had come to regard Seznec as a 'long-distance student', a 'fernschüler': a title he said he was delighted to receive and which he would strive to deserve.<sup>11</sup> Seznec never managed to visit the KBW in Hamburg, but as early as April 1934 he came to see the new Warburg Institute in London, even before it opened its doors to the public.<sup>12</sup> A year later, in April 1935, he delivered two lectures there under the rubric 'Renaissance Mythography in Humanism and Art'. These neatly define the foci of his research: the first treated 'Mythological Sources of the Sixteenth Century', the second, 'The Diffusion and Influence of the Iconography of the Gods'.<sup>13</sup> Saxl said of these, shortly before they took place: 'we are looking forward greatly to your lectures, as they deal with a subject so much cherished in our little community.'<sup>14</sup> Seznec quickly established cordial relations with all members of the staff, as the surviving correspondence attests. The many letters exchanged between Seznec and Saxl – first in French and German, then (when it emerged that Seznec read German but slowly) largely in French, and finally, after the move to London, principally in French and English<sup>15</sup> – chart the course of a friendship that proves to have been not only of practical but also of symbolic importance for both.

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10. The congress took place 20–29 September 1930. In the *Actes* (Brussels, 1930), Saxl, Seznec and Mme Seznec are listed as present (I, p. 35); Seznec delivered a paper on 'Martianus Capella et la mythologie du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle' (summarized, I, p. 192).

11. Seznec (Rome) to Gertrud Bing (Hamburg), 31 January 1931: 'Nous avons eu le plaisir de voir arriver à la Hertziana le Dr Stechow. Il m'a dit que la Bibliothèque Warburg m'avait décerné le titre de ferschnüler! Je suis fort satisfait de cet honneur et je tâcherai de le mériter ...'

12. The Warburg Institute, housed at 3 Thames House, Millbank, London SW1, opened officially in May 1934.

13. The lectures were delivered on 17 and 24 April (WIA, WI Lectures 1935).

14. Saxl (London) to Seznec (Florence), 18 March 1935.

15. Saxl (London) to Seznec (Santander), 16 July 1934: 'Dear Mr. Seznec, Forgive my writing to you in English, but I know that you read English much better than I write French.' Occasionally both French translation and German original survive: e.g. a letter in German from Saxl (Hamburg) to Seznec (Cambridge) of c. 21 January 1932, on which is inscribed: 'Fräulein Hertz bitte in das Französische zu übersetzen'. After the War – and three years without exchange – Seznec, on the faculty at Harvard University, began occasionally to correspond in English (16 February 1945 on).

Seznec, when he first made contact with Saxl, was a 'Farnésien' – so called because the Ecole française de Rome (EFR) was housed, along with the French embassy, in the magnificent Palazzo Farnese.<sup>16</sup> The director of the Ecole in these years (1923–37), and the supervisor of Seznec's research, was the eminent Emile Mâle, long a Professor of History of Art at the Sorbonne, respected for his pioneering iconographical handbooks on Gothic, Romanesque and late medieval art, and notorious for his anti-German diatribe, *L'Art allemand et l'art français du moyen âge* of 1917.<sup>17</sup> The scholar whom Seznec came to know in 1929, then in his late 60s, had recently opened a new chapter in his art-historical life. Becoming director of the EFR, Mâle turned his attention to the understudied Italian Baroque, retrained himself by systematically visiting hundreds of churches and chapels, and prepared the last of his monumental syntheses, *L'art religieux après le Concile du Trente* (1932). Before this, in 1927, he had published his first results in an article that caught the attention of the Warburgians. In 'La Clef des allégories peintes et sculptées au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle',<sup>18</sup> Mâle presented the startling discovery that Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* of 1593 – an alphabetized manual for painters and poets indicating how to represent virtues, vices, passions and effects, first illustrated in 1603 – unlocked the enigmas of many otherwise perplexing pictorial cycles. This was a time in which basic decipherment of iconographical programmes was an ongoing scholarly task. In the very same year, 1927, Saxl published his *Antike Götter in der Spätrenaissance*, where he made available an edition of the mythographic tract that Jacopo Zucchi had written to accompany the mythological cycle he had painted in the Palazzo Rucellai in Rome, a text printed in 1602.<sup>19</sup> Saxl's book had attracted the attention of the young Farnésien.

On 16 May 1930 Seznec wrote to Saxl asking for advice. In the following year he would be completing a *mémoire* on the 'Iconographie des dieux antiques en Italie pendant le 16e siècle'. He had been working in the Vatican library and the Hertziana, and he had read with greatest interest publications of the Warburg Library, notably Saxl's *Antike Götter in der Spätrenaissance* and Panofsky's *Hercules am Scheidewege*. He would like to know if the library was preparing a comprehensive work ('un ouvrage d'ensemble') on this theme and, more particularly, if any one of

16. The Ecole française de Rome (founded 1875), distinct from the far older French Academy housed in the Villa Medici on the Pincio, was not for artists but for scholars, a place for training young archeologists, art historians, historians and philologists. See C. Pietri and P. Boutry, 'La Scuola francese di Roma', in *Speculum mundi. Roma centro internazionale di ricerche umanistiche. Unione internazionale degli istituti di archeologia, storia e storia dell'arte in Roma*, ed. P. Vian, Rome, 1991, pp. 215–37.

17. On Mâle (1862–1954), his career and his scholarly corpora, see H. Dilly, 'Emile Mâle', in *Altmeister moderner Kunstgeschichte*, ed. H. Dilly, Berlin, 1999, pp. 133–48.

18. *Revue des deux mondes*, 7e pér., 39, 1927, pp. 106–29, 375–94.

19. Published in the Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, 8. Zucchi's tract is entitled *Discorso sopra li dei de' gentili, e loro imprese, con un breue trattato delle attioni de li dodici Cesari, con le dichiarazioni delle loro Medaglie antiche*.

the local *érudits* had undertaken a monograph on the myth of Bacchus during the Renaissance. His own work could potentially take such a form, and he wished to have Saxl's opinion as to the utility and the greater significance of such a study.

Saxl answered at length on 24 May 1930 in a letter that reveals both his generosity and his missionizing intensity. Sez nec's work, he says, falls well within the library's territory – 'unser Arbeitsgebiet'. While no general study of the kind Sez nec intended is in view, the themes in question have received sustained attention. Sez nec is possibly aware that in the last two years of his life Warburg laid the lines for an 'Atlas of the History of the Afterlife of Antique Pictorial Forms' that will appear in the next few years; this, of course, will contain within it the materials for a general iconography of the antique in the sixteenth century. With respect to the idea of a monographic study of Bacchus, Saxl shows himself ambivalent: in and of itself, he says, such a study would be welcome, but it would be difficult and the results possibly not worth the effort required. Saxl compares Wolfgang Stechow's topic, the Daphne-theme, which played a role in literature as well as in the visual arts and in music as well, thus allowing a study of connections and distinctions among the different arts. So far as Saxl knows, Bacchus was not especially important outside, or even in, the pictorial arts – however attractive it would be to trace the path from the image illustrating Albricus to Michelangelo and from Michelangelo to the young Velasquez. Even though it is certainly important to clarify the concept of the Dionysian in the Renaissance, this could likely be done at least as well through the study of nymphs.

Saxl, always one to suggest topics in accord with larger Warburgian initiatives, did not stop here. He reflected on the themes then in most pressing need of study and noted that it would be excellent if someone were to attempt to draw connections between iconographical descriptions in art-theoretical tracts and actual images. The most important task of all, he says, is a study of Ripa's *Iconologia*: Mâle and Panofsky have recently demonstrated the book's extraordinary significance for art history. What is needed first is a good bibliographic study – comparative analysis of the different editions, a tracking of gradual expansions and additions – and then an attempt at a classification of sources (no more than that being possible at present), some of which go back to the twelfth century and even further. There is at the moment, said Saxl, 'no nicer iconographical project': 'keine schönere ikonographische Arbeit' – and the Warburg Library might even be willing to publish it. Still, he acknowledged, it would be a time-consuming task, and so he offered a back-up plan. If not Ripa, then the mythological fresco cycles in Italian palaces of the sixteenth century. Saxl's own work on the Rucellai frescos, he says, 'hängt ja ganz in der Luft': it is up in the air because there are no studies of parallel phenomena, not even a proper investigation of the frescoes in the Palazzo del Te. Even a collection of data, a more precise identification of the contents of the

frescoes, would be an achievement warmly to be welcomed by all those who work generally with iconographical themes.

Seznec responded on 29 May 1930 with becoming gratitude. He understands that work on Bacchus might not repay the effort expended, and he is attracted by the idea of a critical study of Ripa. Mâle had also indicated the importance of work of this kind, and Seznec had begun, via the studies of Ludwig Volkmann, to look at the sources that preceded Ripa: Horapollon, Valeriano, Alciati. But because he cannot undertake a project of such scope at the present moment, he very willingly takes up the final suggestion – the study of mythological frescoes in Italian palaces of the sixteenth century, especially their connections with iconographical treatises. He has already begun to look at the Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola and Vasari's frescoes in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, trying to do for them what Saxl did with the Palazzo Rucellai. The first results have been encouraging, and Saxl's advice has tipped the balance.

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In the years 1930 to 1932 Seznec continued to conduct research in Rome, where he was a part of the international contingent of artists and scholars who congregated at the city's eighteen foreign institutes.<sup>20</sup> Art historians regularly met up at the Hertziana, Henrietta Hertz's art-historical library, founded in 1913, and housed in the Palazzo Zuccari at the top of the Spanish Steps. Here Seznec came to know German art historians. In letters to Saxl he noted when Wolfgang Stechow arrived and when Erwin Panofsky passed through.<sup>21</sup> Fritz Baumgart of the Hertziana became his particular friend, and the two visited Renaissance palaces together, spending two days at Caprarola, on which Baumgart would soon publish a study.<sup>22</sup> As they admired the astrological paintings in the Sala del Mappamondo, they spoke of Saxl.<sup>23</sup> After travels in Verona, Vicenza, Ferrara, Rimini, Padua and Siena, Seznec expressed his regret that Saxl had not been there 'to guide him through the mysteries of the mythological frescoes'.<sup>24</sup>

20. This is the count given by Eugénie Strong in her 'La formazione delle accademie e scuole straniere di Roma', *Capitolium: Rassegna mensile del Governatorato*, 6, 4, 1928, pp. 94–111; *Speculum Mundi* (n. 16 above).

21. Seznec (Rome) to Saxl (Hamburg), 17 March 1931: 'Justement Stechow m'annonce aujourd'hui que M. Panofsky sera là le 25'; and see n. 11 above.

22. In 'La Caprarola di Ameto Orti', *Studi romanzi*, 25, 1935, pp. 77–179, Baumgart made available Orti's description of the palazzo in Latin verse, composed c. 1589.

23. Seznec (Rome) to Saxl (Hamburg), 25 May 1931: 'Nous avons parlé de vous en admirant la Salle de la Mappemonde, et ses peintures astrologiques.'

24. Seznec (Siena) to Saxl (Hamburg), 25 November [1930]: 'J'ai pensé très-souvent à vous; souvent aussi, soyez-en sûr, j'ai regretté que vous ne fussiez pas là pour me guider à travers les mystères des fresques mythologiques!'



In these years Seznec was steadily working his way through editions of the great illustrated mythographic manuals that were produced especially in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini degli dei degli antichi* (first published in Venice in 1556) became a special focus and the subject of his first two, impressively mature, articles, published in the *Mélanges* of the EFR in 1930 and 1931. In 'Erudits et graveurs au XVIe siècle', he took as a starting point the accusation Lorenzo Pignoria made in the preface to his 1615 edition of Cartari's *Imagini*, that engravers, lacking the knowledge necessary to illustrate works on the antique, had spoiled books and injured the truth.<sup>25</sup> Seznec in turn ruminated on the extent of the artists' liability. A year later, in 'Un essai de mythologie comparée au début du XVIIe siècle', he called attention to Pignoria's interpolated discourse on the gods of the eastern and western Indies and his precocious attempts to develop a general theory of religion through the study of Aztec and Japanese idols in relation to Egyptian deities.<sup>26</sup> Seznec also completed at this time his *mémoire* – a text that ended, as it began, as a general treatment of the pagan gods in the sixteenth century – and successfully submitted it to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Mâle was impressed by the *mémoire* and urged Seznec to turn it into a doctoral thesis<sup>27</sup>; Saxl was pleased to learn that Seznec would go forward. As the collegial exchange between Saxl and Seznec continued, Mâle's own work became a point of discussion. In March 1931 Saxl reflected that virtually nothing was known of the actual content of Renaissance mythologies and allegories, and he suggested that it was historically appropriate ('historisch richtig') that Seznec, as a student of the Ecole française, should participate in finding solutions to these problems, for Mâle had made a decisive step forward in his article on Ripa.<sup>28</sup> Contact with Seznec, it becomes clear, had set Saxl to thinking about French scholarship. He says that he had devoted a class in his university *Kolleg* to Mâle's work, noting that he had come to understand the connection between the genesis of the Ripa study and Mâle's position as director of the Ecole française, to conclude: 'Despite all the bitterness that any German-speaking art historian must feel against Mâle, still I rate his achievements extraordinarily high.'<sup>29</sup> Seznec responded: 'The direction he gave to iconographical studies does not seem to me to be

25. *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 47, 1930, pp. 118–37.

26. *Ibid.*, 48, 1931, pp. 268–81.

27. Seznec (Paris) to Saxl (Hamburg), 31 July 1931: 'J'a remis à M. Mâle mon travail sur les Dieux antiques à la fin de la Renaissance. Il s'en est montré satisfait, et m'a vivement engagé à le continuer pour le transformer en thèse.'

28. Saxl (Hamburg) to Seznec (Rome), 10 March 1931: 'Ich habe gerade gestern die Marc-Anton-Suche durchgeblättert und wieder zu meinem Entsetzen gesehen, wie nichts wir von dem Inhalt dieser Mythologeme und Allegorien verstehen. Ich finde es auch historisch richtig, dass schliesslich Sie als Schüler der Ecole française an die Lösung dieser Frage mitarbeiten, denn Mâle hat ja doch in dem Aufsatz über Ripa einen entscheidenden Schritt getan.'

29. *Ibid.*: 'Bei allem was der deutsch schreibende Kunsthistoriker an Bitterkeit gegen Mâle empfinden muss, schätze ich seine Leistungen ganz ausserordentlich hoch.'

understood, or followed, in France – where I have often heard him criticized. However, like you, I think he was right – with the condition that one goes yet further, more deeply than he.<sup>30</sup> During the years between 1932 and 1940, Seznec was actively engaged in preparing his thesis and making his way in the French system. For two years he taught French literature at Cambridge University, and there produced a third article for the *Mélanges* on the diffusion of Italian mythological manuals in England. In this context he developed a line of thought at the core of *La Survivance des dieux antiques*, namely that humanists and writers of the sixteenth century were not so much steeped in the classics as well-versed in the synthetic manuals available to them.<sup>31</sup> Saxl admired this article: ‘One is so grateful to be able to place one’s feet on firm ground in the uncertain world of the mythographers.’<sup>32</sup>

Seznec spent a year teaching in the Lycée Thiers in Marseilles (1933–4) and returned then to Italy for four years to teach at the Institut français in Florence (1934–9). He remained throughout in contact with staff at the Warburg Institute. He frequently called on Saxl for aid and advice and was in turn asked to do favors and to offer opinion on scholarly problems.<sup>33</sup> In 1937 he was one of those asked to contribute a piece to a volume presented to Saxl in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his work at the Warburg Institute.<sup>34</sup> The essay, concerning the motif of the ‘putto with the death’s head’, was subsequently published, integrating Saxl’s suggestions, in the fourth number of the first volume of the *Journal of the Warburg Institute*.<sup>35</sup> Seznec had clearly been encouraged to situate his work within broader theories of the symbol, a task that animated much Warburgian study. The essay concludes:

30. Seznec (Rome) to Saxl (Hamburg), 17 March 1931: ‘J’ai bien pensé à ce que vous me dites au sujet de M. Mâle; la direction qu’il a donnée aux études iconographiques ne me paraît pas être comprise ni suivie en France, où je l’ai souvent entendu critiquer. Pourtant je pense comme vous qu’il a raison, – à condition qu’on aille encore plus loin, et plus profondément que lui.’

31. ‘Les manuels mythologiques italiens et leur diffusion en Angleterre à la fin de la Renaissance’, *Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire*, 50, 1933, pp. 276–92. Seznec’s final article in the *Mélanges* was ‘La Mascarade des dieux à Florence en 1565’, 52, 1935, pp. 224–43.

32. Saxl (Hamburg) to Seznec (Rome), 21 March 1932: ‘Man ist so dankbar dafür, wenn man einmal in dieser unsicheren Welt der Mythographen so festen Boden unter die Füße bekommt, wie durch Ihre Arbeit.’

33. Seznec was asked to act as guarantor when Edgar Wind, ‘stateless’ because of his father’s Argentinian nationality, travelled to Paris (Bing to Seznec, 7 September 1931) and to offer an iconographical opinion on a piece of metalwork in the Vienna museum (Saxl to Seznec, c. 21 January 1932).

34. Bing (London) to Seznec (Florence), 4 November 1937: ‘I am sure he would very much like to see a contribution from you, and I sincerely hope you can let us have a short paper by 1st December, as we are anxious to make the presentation during that month.’ A remarkably short lead-time!

35. ‘Youth, Innocence and Death. Some Notes on a Medallion on the Certosa of Pavia’, *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, I, 1937–8, pp. 298–303. Saxl, thanking Seznec for the Festschrift article in a letter of 6 January 1938, had added a vital piece of information: ‘Of course, you are right in connecting the Apianus woodcut and the relief on the façade of the Certosa. Perhaps I can help you to find the missing link between the German woodcut and the Lombard sculpture. There are two medals attributed to Boldù showing exactly the same composition, which date from 1466 ...’.

The study of these iconographical traditions does not only concern the history of the Renaissance, of its immediate sources and its lasting influence; it concerns the general history of symbols. It leads us to contemplate the strange unchangingness of forms, which survive the original idea of which they were the symbol, to absorb in the course of time other dreams or other thoughts.

Career advancement depended upon the completion and publication of his thesis. These were anxious times in Europe, a position at Harvard was on offer, and Seznec was understandably eager to become safely credentialed. The saga of the publication of the *Survivance des dieux antiques* began in 1938. Preparation of the book became something of a Warburg Institute house project, many getting into the act. Anthony Blunt was made point person until his departure in 1939,<sup>36</sup> at which point Roger Hinks took over.<sup>37</sup> Rudolf Wittkower helped with the photos, the librarian Hans Meier took charge of the bibliography, Gertrud Bing made suggestions about indexing, Saxl read proofs.

Publishing rarely goes smoothly, but in this case there were extraordinary mishaps most the fault of the French printer, Louis-Jean, in Gap. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that the text had to be printed in two formats, as a thesis following official Sorbonne guidelines (100 copies) and as a book (530 copies). Disasters piled one on the other and Seznec, then doing military service, frequently despaired: sections of the proofs were lost; the paper supply in the chosen shade was insufficient; the plate numbers in the thesis were one off, and the page numbers had been changed so that the index was rendered useless; and the plates were printed the wrong size and so had to be pasted into the thesis and bound into the book by means of an expensive process. Then, as a final blow, the books could not be transported out of France until the end of the war.<sup>38</sup> Still, as we have seen, the reversals were of short duration, and the *Survivance* would go on to enjoy noteworthy success.

In the post-war years Seznec quickly reestablished his connection with the Warburg Institute. Maintaining his interest in the relations between the literary and artistic spheres, he produced over many years, in collaboration with Jean

36. On Blunt's connection with the Warburg Institute and his increasing involvement with the Courtauld Institute, see M. Carter, *Anthony Blunt: His Lives*, New York, 2001, pp. 209–20.

37. On Hinks' connection with the Warburg Institute, see *The Gymnasium of the Mind. The Journals of Roger Hinks, 1933–1963*, ed. J. Goldsmith, Salisbury, 1984, esp. pp. 57–8 (11–12 December 1938).

38. It took some time for postal connections, between France and England to be fully reestablished. On 17 August 1945 Saxl notified Seznec he had authorized Louis-Jean to deliver the order. On 16 February 1945 Seznec (Cambridge, Mass.) had written to Gertrud Bing (London): 'Do you know that two years ago he [Louis-Jean] sent me (on my request) two copies of the book: those two copies were detained at Bermuda ... and they have just been released and sold in New York! Meyer Schapiro bought one of the two!' Frances Yates read a copy in London in the early 1940s, as she notes in her 'Autobiographical Fragments', in *Collected Essays*, III, eds J. N. Hillgarth and J. B. Trapp, London, 1984, p. 317. See the essay by Elizabeth McGrath in this volume, n. 1.

Adhémar,<sup>39</sup> a four-volume edition of Diderot's *Salon* criticism. This project, too, proves to have originated at the Warburg Institute, Saxl, Blunt and Walter Friedländer having helped to define it.<sup>40</sup> The pagan gods never ceased to draw Seznec's interest. His secondary thesis on Flaubert, published by Vrin in 1940, had treated *Les sources de l'épisode des dieux dans La Tentation de saint Antoine*, and he extended his study in *Nouvelles études sur La Tentation de saint Antoine*, published in 1949 by the Warburg Institute.<sup>41</sup> In 1962 he turned to the subject of 'Marcel Proust et les Dieux', showing that Proust's work, 'as modern and singular as it is, remains tributary, through all sorts of diversions, to that great classical river that has never ceased to fertilize French literature'.<sup>42</sup> In 1978 Seznec delivered the Messenger Lectures at Cornell University, six lectures never published, concerning the 'Revival and Metamorphoses of the Gods in Nineteenth Century Art and Literature'. A hint of his range is contained in the individual lecture titles: 'The Passing of the Gods', 'After Strange Gods', 'The Awakening of the Centaur', 'The Resurrection of Isis', 'Olympus Parodied and the Jewelled Gods' and, finally, 'The Cave at Ithaca'.<sup>43</sup> The link with the Warburg Institute continued until the end of his life: Seznec's final essay, 'La Fontaine égyptologue', appeared in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* in 1982.<sup>44</sup>

\* \* \*

39. Diderot, *Salons*, 4 vols, Oxford, 1957–67; 2nd edn., 3 vols, 1975–83. Seznec and Adhémar had long been acquainted. Seznec brought Adhémar's thesis to the attention of the Warburg Institute, where it was published in 1938 as *Influences antiques dans l'art du moyen âge français* (Studies of the Warburg Institute, 7). The project cost the Warburgians a good deal of effort. As Saxl wrote to Seznec on 6 January 1938: 'It is very nice of Adhémar to have kind feelings towards us. I cannot deny that we have had and will have much trouble with his book. His quotations are simply hopelessly incorrect, and his knowledge of critical literature other than French is not very wide. Although I like his book very much, I am not prepared to publish it before these minor imperfections are removed.'

40. There was talk at the Warburg Institute in 1945 of undertaking a publishing project called 'Sources'. On 6 June 1945 Saxl, having talked to Friedländer about 'the necessity of editing the sources', wrote to Seznec: 'To combine art history with the study of both Italian and French art literature is just the thing for which you are born. Thus, I think, if we meet again we can draw up a good program for your future hours of "leisure"'. On 27 September 1945 he wrote: '[Blunt] thinks that given your literary background you would do best to make an edition of Diderot's *Salons*. There is no annotated edition and it would be a work of real importance to start you off.'

41. Studies of the Warburg Institute, 18. Seznec, who had treated Flaubert's first version of the novel (1849) in the earlier book, turned here to its final version (1874). See Levi (n. 1 above), p. 649. The Warburg Institute was eager to publish another book by Seznec (Bing to Saxl, 12 March 1945).

42. The Zaharoff Lecture for 1962, Oxford, 1962, p. 17: '... son oeuvre, toute moderne et singulière qu'elle est, demeure tributaire – par toutes sortes de dérivations – de ce grand fleuve classique qui n'a jamais fini de fertiliser la littérature française'.

43. Taylor Institution, Oxford, MS Fol. F. 28. Delivered between 28 March and 6 April 1978.

44. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 55, 1982, pp. 248–50. Seznec here traces the movements of and responses to two Egyptian sarcophagi discovered in 1632, eventually deposited in the Louvre. This would be the last of nine pieces that Seznec published in the journal (vols 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 15 [two essays], 20, 45). Another venue he favored was the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.

*La Survivance des dieux antiques* has long been a touchstone for those working in the field of Renaissance mythography. An original synthesis, a new ordering of abstruse material written with a light touch, it integrates the results of personal research on mythographic texts and images and recent, especially Warburgian, scholarship.<sup>45</sup> Seznec effectively accomplished his initial idea of writing an 'ouvrage d'ensemble': he traced the sources and the diffusion of traditions, giving shape to a vast body of material, in its ambition somewhat in the mode of Emile Mâle.<sup>46</sup> He devised an ingenious armature for presenting textual and visual material, focusing on the intellectual matrices – historical, physical, and moral – in which ideas were transferred across the centuries: 'we ... attempt to show that the gods lived on in the Middle Ages in concepts which had already taken shape at the end of the pagan epoch – interpretations proposed by the ancients themselves to explain the origin and nature of their divinities.'<sup>47</sup> The heart and center of Seznec's contribution lies in his probing investigation of the great mythographical handbooks deftly deployed by early modern humanists throughout Europe. He sought to define a Renaissance 'science of mythology' and to extrapolate a 'theory of the use of mythography' and, in a final chapter, following Saxl's advice of 1930, made cautious efforts to assess the actual impact of the manuals in the work of artists and writers.

In 1932 Seznec wrote to Saxl: 'I admire always the way that your philosophical aperçus rest on an immense and precise documentation. And I observe once more that, thus conceived, the history of art gains in import, in human significance.'<sup>48</sup> Saxl, in a letter of 1934 to the great Baroque scholar and Poussiniste Walter Friedländer, said of Seznec: 'He has such a good literary form and a first-rate classical education.'<sup>49</sup> The scholars' mutual admiration was inflected by a sense of cultural difference, and the book that owed so much to their friendship, *La*

45. The overlap initially seemed a little too great: in a letter of 21 June 1939, Hinks, urging that some changes be made in the selection of plates, passed on Saxl's opinion that 'in a number of cases the material duplicated that of many of our other publications, and that it might be possible to substitute, without prejudice to your argument, less familiar matter.' Seznec cites numerous works by Warburg, Saxl and Panofsky in his bibliography.

46. That Seznec was consulting Mâle's volumes is indicated in a letter of 16 June 1939 to Bing: 'Je me demande si je dois faire une *table des matières* analytique – à la manière de Mâle, avec le sommaire de chaque chapitre. Qu'en pense M. Saxl?'

47. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. B. F. Sessions (Bollingen Series, 38), New York, 1953, pp. 3–4.

48. Seznec (Cambridge) to Saxl (Hamburg), 27 March 1932: 'J'admire toujours sur quelle documentation immense et précise s'appuient vos aperçus philosophiques; et je constate une fois de plus combien ainsi conçue, l'histoire de l'Art gagne en portée, en signification humaine.'

49. Saxl (London) to Friedländer (Freiburg i. Breisgau), 9 April 1934: 'Vor einigen Tagen war Seznec hier, der wieder eine sehr nette Arbeit über die italienische Mythographen und deren Verbreitung hier in England während der Renaissance geschrieben hat [see above n. 32]. Er hat eine so gute literarische Form und eine vorzügliche klassische Bildung. Er ist jetzt Professeur an einem Lycée in Marseilles und will für längere Zeit zu uns kommen.' Gertrud Bing, advising on the index, wrote (23 June 1939): 'Fortunately, your book has the advantage of being extremely readable – so why should anybody be deprived of the pleasure of reading it by too tempting an Index?'

*Survivance des dieux antiques*, may rightly be viewed as a European product: it was composed by a French literary historian living in Rome, Cambridge, Marseilles, and Florence, working in close connection with a team of Austrian, German, and English scholars active in Hamburg and London. A synthetic study in several senses, drawing upon diverse academic traditions and melding materials from multiple disciplines, it is a book of its time that would serve changing scholarly needs in succeeding decades.

\* \* \*

## Appendix

The letters transcribed below represent the beginning of a lengthy exchange between Jean Seznec, Fritz Saxl and other members of the Warburg Institute, including Gertrud Bing, Anthony Blunt, Roger Hinks, Hans Meier, Edgar Wind and Rudolf Wittkower. All letters are located in the Warburg Institute Archive, London (WIA, GC – Seznec).

*A. From Jean Seznec, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, to Fritz Saxl, KBW, Hamburg.*  
Handwritten.

16 mai 1930

Monsieur le Professeur,

Je prends la liberté de vous écrire pour vous demander conseil.

Je suis depuis un an membre de l'Ecole Française de Rome, et je dois terminer l'an prochain un mémoire sur l' "Iconographie des Dieux antiques en Italie pendant le 16<sup>e</sup> Siècle".<sup>50</sup> J'ai commencé à rassembler les éléments de ce travail à la Bibliothèque Vaticane, et à la Bibliothèque Hertziana que je fréquente assidûment.

Or, je connais les travaux publiés sous votre direction par la Bibliothèque Warburg. J'ai lu en particulier avec infiniment d'intérêt votre étude: "Antike Götter in der Spätrenaissance", et la monographie récente de M. Erwin Panofsky sur "Hercules am Scheidewege, und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst". Je voudrais donc savoir:

50. Fellowships at the Ecole française de Rome were for two years. In the second year it was required that a *mémoire* be completed and submitted to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

1° – Si la Bibliothèque Warburg ne prépare pas en ce moment un ouvrage d'ensemble sur l'Iconographie des Dieux au 16<sup>e</sup> Siècle.

2° – Si aucune monographie concernant le mythe de *Bacchus* pendant la Renaissance n'a été entreprise par l'un des érudits qui vous entourent. Car il se pourrait aussi que mon travail se réduisit à une monographie de ce genre.<sup>51</sup>

En d'autres termes, je voudrais être sûr de ne pas travailler un sujet déjà traité, ou sur le point de l'être, par un savant de la Bibliothèque Warburg.

Je vous serais obligé, Monsieur le Professeur, si vous aviez la bonté de me fixer sur ce point. Et je serais aussi très-honoré d'avoir votre avis sur l'utilité d'une étude iconographique sur Bacchus comme celle dont j'ai l'idée en ce moment. Pensez-vous qu'un pareil sujet puisse conduire à des conclusions d'une portée générale, intéressantes pour l'Histoire de la Renaissance elle-même?

Veillez me pardonner de solliciter vos conseils, car je ne saurais vraiment consulter de maître plus autorisé. Et recevez, Monsieur le Professeur, l'assurance de mon profond respect

Jean Seznec

***B. Fritz Saxl, KBW, Hamburg, to Jean Seznec, Palazzo Farnese, Rome.***

Typed. Handwritten corrections by Saxl incorporated.

24. Mai 1930

Sehr geehrter Herr

Ich bestätige dankend den Empfang Ihres Briefes vom 16.d.M. den ich mit Vergnügen beantworte, da Ihre Arbeit durchaus in unser Arbeitsgebiet gehört.

Was Ihre Fragen betrifft, so bereitet die Bibliothek Warburg augenblicklich keine generelle Ikonographie des 16. Jhts. vor, wenn wir uns auch natürlich dauernd mit diesen Themen beschäftigen. Es wird Ihnen vielleicht bekannt sein, dass Professor Warburg in den beiden letzten Jahren vor seinem im Oktober 1929 erfolgten Tod einen Atlas zur Geschichte des Nachlebens antiker Bildformen entworfen hat, der in den nächsten Jahren erscheinen wird, und in diesem Atlas findet sich natürlich Material für eine allgemeine Ikonographie der Antike im 16. Jahrhundert.<sup>52</sup>

51. The topic of Seznec's *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures* (1926) had been 'La Bacchanale et la fête du vin dans l'art du XVI<sup>e</sup> et du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles' (WIA, GC – Seznec 1934–36: Curriculum vitae of 1935).

52. It was the never-realized intention of the KBW to publish Aby Warburg's *Bilderatlas*, the major

Was nun Ihre Absicht betrifft, eine Ikonographie des Bacchus im 16. Jahrhundert zu schreiben, so wäre an sich eine solche Arbeit ausserordentlich begrüssenswert. Ich fürchte nur, dass die Arbeit schwierig und langdauernd sein müsste, und dass ihre Resultate vielleicht nicht so besonders lohnenswert sein werden. Bei uns ist z. B. derzeit eine Ikonographie des Daphnethemas in Arbeit (Dr. Stechow in Göttingen).<sup>53</sup> Diese Arbeit hat den materiellen Reiz, dass das Daphnethema ebenso in der Literatur, wie in der bildenden Kunst, wie endlich in der Musik eine überragende Rolle spielt und man an diesem Thema die Verbindung der Künste und ihre Unterschiede besonders gut erfassen kann. Das Bacchusthema dagegen spielt, so viel ich weiss, ausserhalb der bildenden Kunst keine zentrale Rolle und eigentlich auch nicht in der bildenden Kunst selbst; wenn es natürlich auch sehr reizvoll wäre, etwa den Weg von Albricusbild zum Michelangelo und von Michelangelo wieder zum jungen Velasquez zu zeichnen.<sup>54</sup> Auch wenn das gewiss sehr wesentlich wäre, dass man den Begriff des Dionysischen in der Renaissance klärte, so scheint es mir bei dieser Untersuchung doch nicht gut herauszukommen und würde etwa bei einer Arbeit über die Nymphe mindestens ebenso deutlich.

Uebrigens möchte ich Sie darauf aufmerksam machen, dass verwandte Themen (Apollo) z.B. Baron Langenskiöld bearbeitet; Sie wäre vielleicht ratsam, wenn Sie sich mit ihm in Verbindung setzen würden.<sup>55</sup>

Wenn ich mir überlege, welche Themen im Augenblick zur Arbeit notwendig wären, so wäre es ausgezeichnet, wenn man eine Verbindung zwischen der Ikonographie der kunsttheoretischen Traktate und den tatsächlichen Bildern herzustellen versuchte. Ich denke etwa an die Bearbeitung des Bandes Ikono-

project of his late years, left incomplete at his death. For an introduction to the project, see E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. An Intellectual Biography*, London, 1970, pp. 283–306; for reproductions of the composite plates, see Aby Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. M. Warnke and C. Brink, 2nd edn (Aby Warburg, Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe, 2. Abt., Bd. II.1), Berlin, 2003.

53. *Apollo und Daphne* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, 23), Leipzig–Berlin, 1932. Saxl gives the address: Calsowstrasse 1. At this date Stechow (1896–1974) was a Privatdozent at the University of Göttingen. After emigrating to the United States, he taught briefly at the University of Wisconsin and then for a quarter of a century at Oberlin College (1940–63). See U. Wendland, *Biographisches Handbuch deutschsprachiger Kunsthistoriker im Exil*, 2 vols, Munich, 1999, s.v. Stechow.

54. Saxl is likely referring to: 1) illustrations of c. 1420 accompanying the *De deorum imaginibus libellus* assigned to 'Albricus' (Vat. Reg. lat. 1290, fol. 5v), which he had catalogued in his *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters in römischen Bibliotheken*, Heidelberg, 1915, pp. 67–8; 2) Michelangelo's marble statue of Bacchus (c. 1497) in the Bargello in Florence, later treated by Edgar Wind in *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, New Haven, 1958, ch. XII: 'A Bacchic Mystery by Michelangelo'; and 3) Velasquez's *Feast of Bacchus* (c. 1629) in the Museo del Prado, Madrid.

55. Saxl gives the address: Uppsala Universiteit. Friherre Eric Langenskiöld, best known as author of *Michele Sanmichele, the Architect of Verona, his Life and Works*, Uppsala, 1938, earlier wrote an article on Greco-Roman and Baroque renditions of Apollo's challenger Marsyas: 'Marsyas och Sliparen', *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, 6, March 1937, pp. 6–19.



graphie über Lomazzo,<sup>56</sup> oder, was mir am wichtigsten im Augenblick erschiene, eine Bearbeitung der Ikonographie des Ripa.<sup>57</sup> Gerade in den letzten Jahren ist von Mâle wie auch von Panofsky die ausserordentliche Bedeutung dieses Buches für die Kunstgeschichte klargelegt worden.<sup>58</sup> 1914 hat jemand in Oud-Holland gezeigt, dass auch zu Vermeer Verbindungen laufen.<sup>59</sup> Trotzdem besitzen wir noch nicht einmal den Ansatz zu einer kritischen Ausgabe des Ripa; hier scheint mir eine Aufgabe allerersten Ranges gestellt nämlich, erstens eine Bibliographie des Ripa zu liefern: der Vergleich der verschiedenen Ausgaben, ihre allmähliche Anreicherung und Veränderung würde allein schon ausserordentlich interessant zu verfolgen sein. Dazu käme zweitens ein Versuch – denn um mehr kann es sich im Augenblick nicht handeln – der Gliederung der Quellen des Ripa, die ja stellenweise bis ins 12. Jahrhundert und vielleicht noch tiefer zurückreichen. Es gibt m.E. im Augenblick keine schönere ikonographische Arbeit als diese.<sup>60</sup> Nur eines scheint mir für Sie dabei eine Schwierigkeit: die Arbeit im Gesamtumfang im Laufe eines einzigen Jahres zu liefern. Hätte man aber erstmal ein Jahr lang in Italien daran gearbeitet, so könnte man wohl in Frankreich damit fortfahren. Ich zweifle nicht, dass man dafür auch einen Verleger finden würde und glaube sogar, dass, wenn Sie es wünschten, die Bibliothek Warburg dafür zu haben wäre.

Sollten Sie vor dieser Aufgabe zurückschrecken, so fällt mir noch ein Thema ein, dass fruchtbar[er] sein könnte, als eine Ikonographie des Bacchus, nämlich eine ikonographische Untersuchung über die mythologischen Freskenzyklen der italienischen Paläste des 16. Jahrhunderts. Die Edition der Rucellai-Fresken hängt ja ganz in der Luft, weil noch keine einzige Untersuchung bisher über die parallelen Phänomene besteht. Nicht einmal über die Fresken des Palastes del Tè gibt es etwas Ordentliches.<sup>61</sup> Schon eine blosse Materialsammlung mit genauer Angabe des Inhalts der Fresken wäre eine Leistung, die von allen aufs Wärmste

56. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura*, Milan, 1584.

57. Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia ovvero Descriptione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi*, Rome 1593; 2nd edn, Rome, 1603.

58. Mâle, 'Le Clef' (n. 18 above); Erwin Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, 18), Leipzig/Berlin, 1930, pp. 174–7 and *passim*.

59. A. J. Barnouw, 'Vermeers zoogenaamd "Novum Testamentum"', *Oud-Holland*, 32, 1914, pp. 50–54.

60. It was Saxl's student Erna Mandowsky who would write the doctoral dissertation on Ripa's *Iconologia*. See her *Untersuchungen zur Iconologie des Cesare Ripa*, Hamburg, 1934; and 'Ricerche intorno all'Iconologia di Cesare Ripa', *La Bibliofilia*, 41 (1939), 1940, pp. 7–27, 111–24, 204–35, 279–327. Saxl (3 November 1934) arranged on Mandowsky's behalf that Seznec forward a copy of the thesis to Mâle. Elizabeth McGrath recalls a conversation she had with Mandowsky in London, probably in the early 1980s, in which Mandowsky revealed that she had really wished to work on Picasso but that Saxl had pushed her toward Ripa.

61. E. H. Gombrich came to the Warburg Institute in 1936 and served as its director from 1959 to 1976; his doctoral dissertation (Vienna, 1933) treated the Palazzo del Tè in Mantua. Extracts were published as 'Zum Werke Giulio Romanos: 1. Der Palazzo del Tè, 2. Versuch einer Deutung,' *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, N. F. 8, 1934, pp. 79–104; 9, 1935, pp. 121–50.

begrüsst werden würde, die sich überhaupt mit ikonographischen Themen befassen.

Wir sind sehr gern bereit, Ihnen, so weit es unsere Mittel erlauben, bei Ihren Arbeiten behilflich zu sein.

[Fritz Saxl]

*C. From Jean Seznec, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, to Fritz Saxl, KBW, Hamburg. Handwritten.*

29 mai 1930

Monsieur le Professeur,

Je vous remercie profondément de votre lettre, – aussi explicite, aussi complète et aussi bienveillante que je pouvais le souhaiter.

Je reconnais que l'interêt et la portée d'une Iconographie de Bacchus ne répondraient peut-être pas au travail qu'elle exigerait; mais je vous suis très-obligé de m'avoir indiqué la Daphné et l'Apollon que préparent M.M. Stechow et Langenskiöld.

L'étude critique de Ripa, que vous me proposez, me séduirait beaucoup. M. Mâle m'avait en effet signalé l'importance d'un travail de ce genre, et je l'ai moi-même constatée en étudiant cette année après M. Volkmann les prédécesseurs de Ripa, "Horus",<sup>62</sup> Pierio Valeriano<sup>63</sup> et Alciati.<sup>64</sup> Mais puisqu'un travail de si longue haleine m'est pour l'instant interdit, je me range très-volontiers à votre dernière suggestion: l'étude des fresques mythologiques dans les Palais Italiens au 16<sup>e</sup> Siècle – dans leurs rapports, particulièrement, avec les traités d'Iconographie.

J'avais commencé d'étudier déjà le Palais Farnèse de Caprarola, et les fresques de Vasari au Palazzo Vecchio de Florence, comme vous l'avez fait pour le Palais Ruccellai. Les premiers résultats sont encourageants, – et vos conseils me décident tout-à-fait.

Il se peut que j'aille à Hambourg en Septembre. De toute façon, croyez, Monsieur le Professeur, que j'accepte avec gratitude l'offre de la Bibliothèque

62. A copy of Horapollo's late antique *Hieroglyphica*, offering (spurious) explanations of Egyptian hieroglyphics, was discovered on the island of Andros in 1419 and first printed in Venice in 1505.

63. Pierio Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, sive de sacris Aegyptiorum aliarumque gentium literis commentarii*, Basle, 1556.

64. Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum liber*, Augsburg, 1531. Seznec refers to Ludwig Volkmann's *Bilderschriften der Renaissance. Hieroglyphik und Emblematik in ihren Beziehung und Fortwirkungen* (Leipzig, 1923).

ELIZABETH SEARS

Warburg de me fournir des renseignements nouveaux; et soyez assuré de ma respectueuse reconnaissance.

Jean Seznec